## City of Jacksonville Social Services Division Independent Living Resource Center Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office

**Hubbard House**



### Advocating and Collaborating for Change through Empowerment, Safety, and Self-Determination in Jacksonville

**Strategic Plan**





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# Introduction

AccessJax is a community collaboration based in Jacksonville, Florida, which is focused on improving services to survivors of domestic violence who have a disability or who are Deaf. AccessJax was established in October of 2015 after receiving funding from the United States Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women. AccessJax (“the Collaboration”) is comprised of four partners: the City of Jacksonville; the Independent Living Resource Center of Northeast Florida (“ILRC”), which is the local disability center for independent living; Hubbard House, Jacksonville’s certified domestic violence agency; and the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office (“JSO”). The name of the Collaboration is an acronym for “Advocating and Collaborating for Change through Empowerment, Safety, and Self- Determination in Jacksonville.”

The partners to the Collaboration have come together to identify and create sustainable, systemic changes within our organizations that will result in a fully accessible and responsive network of services for victims of domestic violence in our community who are Deaf or who have a disability. This Strategic Plan is designed to guide us as we improve systems at the intersection of intimate partner violence and individuals with a disability or who are Deaf.

Systemic change will be focused on service provision by partners ILRC, Hubbard House, and the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office. The City of Jacksonville serves primarily as convener, facilitator, and fiscal administrator of the grant, and therefore did not participate in the Needs Assessment beyond providing appropriate support where needed.

# Collaboration Overview

## AccessJax Partners

The **City of Jacksonville** has been a leader in both domestic violence solutions and disability rights for many years. Programs relative to the Collaboration include the following:

* The Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP) is composed of governmental units and community agencies, including the partners to this Collaboration. The goals of DVIP are to protect

victims of domestic violence and their children, hold perpetrators accountable, and bring cases to court for resolution.

* The coordination of the injunction process in the Duval County Courthouse provides domestic violence advocacy and safety planning for individuals seeking injunctions.
* The Mayor's Disability Council is dedicated to improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities of all types. The Council also addresses the needs of the Deaf community. Their mission is to raise awareness in a public forum of the needs of persons with disabilities and to assist in the formulation of solutions to meet those needs.
	+ The City of Jacksonville Disabled Services Division’s mission is to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities by addressing, assessing, and resolving the many barriers they encounter, including transportation, housing, accessibility, discrimination, and employment.
* The City of Jacksonville Victim Services Center is a central component to provision of services to victims of crime, including individuals with disabilities and Deaf individuals.

**Hubbard House, Inc.** is the certified domestic violence center for Duval County. Hubbard House was founded in 1976, making it the oldest domestic violence shelter in Florida. Hubbard House services include:

* Emergency shelter
* 24-hour crisis hotline
* Safety planning for adults and children
* Therapeutic childcare center
* Counseling for adults and children
* Outreach programs for adults and children
* Teen group counseling
* Court advocacy
* Assistance with job training and placement
* Extensive community and professional education activities
* Media outreach and public awareness campaigns
* Batterers’ intervention programs
* Many collaborative programs with local agencies, including the City of Jacksonville, and the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office

Hubbard House also serves a significant number of sexual assault survivors as a high percentage of its program participants have experienced intimate partner sexual violence. In addition, Hubbard House provides shelter on a temporary basis to survivors of non- intimate partner sexual violence.

The **Independent Living Center of Northeast Florida** has a long history of collaborative service in the community and an unparalleled depth of experience in disability issues. Its mission is to empower all people with a disability (as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act or Rehabilitation Act of 1973) to live independent and self- empowered lives. The vision of ILRC is to be a consumer choice, cross disability, community based, and consumer participant organization serving as a resource to people with disabilities. The ILRC of Northeast Florida is the Center for Independent Living (CIL) in Jacksonville and provides four core services:

* **Independent Living** - The ILRC assists consumers who have disabilities with skill development in areas such as money management, goal setting, accessing community transportation, utilization of equipment, and employment readiness.
* **Advocacy** - The ILRC assists consumers in self, individual, and systems advocacy. The ILRC staff assists individuals, businesses, and other interested organizations in learning more about the Americans with Disabilities Act in order to become ADA Compliant and Disability Friendly.
	+ **Information and Referral** - The ILRC acts as a clearinghouse for information to be provided to consumers to assist in living independently. The ILRC furnishes disability related information for consumers and the general public.
	+ **Peer Counseling** - The ILRC offers ongoing peer support opportunities for individuals and groups to support each other with information and experiences in order to facilitate independent living.

Additionally, two of its programs, the Deaf Consumer Program and the Disability Victims Advocacy Program, will be essential to the work of this Collaboration. These programs already have a solid, trusting relationship with the Jacksonville Deaf and Disability Community.

The mission of the **Jacksonville Sheriff's Office** is to protect the lives and property of the citizens of the community, to preserve the peace and to prevent crime and disorder while constantly guarding personal liberties as prescribed by law. Programs relating to the work of the Collaboration include:

* The goal of the Victim Services Unit is to identify and meet the needs of victims by reviewing programs and resources available in the community to assure availability of services; disseminating pertinent information to JSO employees to keep them knowledgeable in assisting victims; training all employees regarding programs so proper referrals can be made; ensuring that all JSO employees are trained in victim/witness rights; and acting as a liaison between JSO and other service agencies.
* JSO has long emphasized the importance of community involvement and support in its mission of protecting the citizens of Duval County; JSO is therefore a partner in many community collaborations aimed at addressing the needs of specific populations.

The Intimate Violence Enhanced Services Team (InVEST) is a collaborative effort among the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office, the City of Jacksonville, and Hubbard House. The mission of InVEST is to identify and intervene in the most potentially lethal domestic violence cases; its primary goal is to reduce intimate partner domestic violence homicides in Jacksonville.

##

## Vision, Mission, Focus, and Values

### Vision

We envision a safe, accessible, culturally competent, and empowering network of fully inclusive services for victims/survivors of domestic violence who are Deaf or who have a disability.

### Mission

Our mission is to transform services provided by the Collaboration’s respective agencies into a seamless, responsive, and sustainable network that fully meets the needs of survivors of domestic violence who are Deaf or who have a disability. To achieve this result, we will do the following:

* + Build an effective collaboration
	+ Engage in cross trainings, so that partnering agencies fully share their knowledge and experiences
	+ Increase staff and volunteer skills, confidence, and comfort in serving survivors who are Deaf or who have a disability
	+ Identify barriers, needs, strengths, and resources in the Collaboration’s partner agencies
	+ Identify, develop, and enhance our agencies’ internal policies and procedures to improve responsiveness and accessibility
	+ Create and enhance environments where the right to self- determination is honored
	+ Formalize connections among agencies to build a seamless and dynamic system of support for survivors
	+ Build capacity to respond to cultural and linguistic needs, including effective modes of communication and culturally competent safety planning and advocacy
	+ Raise awareness of availability of services among survivors who are Deaf or who have a disability.

###  Focus

Our focus is on serving victims/survivors of intimate partner violence who are Deaf or who have a disability.

## Values

In forming our Collaboration, we set out the values that would guide our work. They are more fully stated in our Collaboration Charter and as Core Values in Appendix A of this Strategic Report. But we want to draw particular attention to two of these values or beliefs that inform our work as we formulate this Strategic Plan and implement the changes it describes.

First, we believe that providing services to survivors who have a disability or who are Deaf should be informed by the social or community model of disability. The social model of disability holds that disability is caused by the way that society is organized, rather than by a person’s difference. This model puts the responsibility on society to eliminate physical, attitudinal, and institutional barriers. As agencies that serve survivors, we are committed to eliminating these barriers in order to create and sustain an environment in which all survivors can actively participate on an equal basis.

Second, we are mindful that, from its earliest days, the domestic violence movement has been survivor-led. This principle works in tandem with the mantra of the disability rights movement: “Nothing about us without us.” We are committed to learning from and being led by Deaf survivors and survivors with disabilities as we work toward a community where all survivors have full access to a well-informed, respectful, culturally competent, and a collaborative network of service providers.

We also want to draw attention to the use of certain terms in our Collaboration and in this Strategic Plan. The most common generally terms used, depending on the setting, to name those who have experienced violence are “victim” and “survivor.” There has been much discussion over the years about these words, with people advocating that one or the other is more appropriate to describe a person who has been abused. “Survivor” is generally the word of choice with domestic violence and sexual assault advocates, especially in a therapeutic setting, because it is thought to be more compatible with ideas of strength and healing. “Victim” tends to be preferred by other agencies, especially law enforcement and is also used in the Florida Statutes. Victim is also used

by many in the victim rights movement. Professionals in most settings sometimes use both.

In the course of our work in this Collaboration and in this Strategic Plan, both terms are used at different times, in part depending on the subject being discussed. It is important to note that the word “victim” simply means someone who has been harmed by another. It has no inherent negative connotations except as to the perpetrator of violence. We in AccessJax believe that we should avoid assigning and strengthening negative connotations of the term “victim” as to the person who has experienced violence.

## Planning and Work to Date

 Since the inception of the grant in October of 2015, we have

* Developed our Collaboration Charter, which is the foundation of our team and which guides and structures our activities. The charter also incorporates important values and assumptions which underlie our work.
* Completed the Vera Institute of Justice Performance Indicators for Hubbard House and ILRC at various intervals to assess organization capacity
* Developed a Needs Assessment Plan which details the goals and

methodology of the needs assessment process

* Conducted the Needs Assessment that gathered information to assess existing strengths and weaknesses in service delivery from the following participants: Deaf individuals and individuals with disabilities; survivors of domestic violence; law enforcement; and staff and leadership of the Collaboration partner organizations
* Developed a Needs Assessment Report that presented the findings of the assessment. The Needs Assessment Report is the basis for the development of this Strategic Plan.

# Needs Assessment Summary

AccessJax has been focused on reviewing the internal capacity of partnering organizations ILRC, Hubbard House, and the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office to provide safe and accessible services to survivors of domestic violence in our community who have a disability or who are Deaf. In addition, we have been exploring ways in which we can strengthen our Collaboration. To understand what changes the partner organizations should make to become more welcoming and accessible, AccessJax conducted an assessment of the needs of survivors of domestic violence who have a disability or who are Deaf. The Needs Assessment also sought to identify the needs of the agencies and staff that serve these survivors and investigated opportunities for AccessJax partner organizations to improve their effectiveness as a collaboration.

The goals of the Needs Assessment are:

1. To assess organizational capacity to work at the intersection of domestic violence and the needs of individuals who have a disability or are Deaf, including strengths and gaps in knowledge, perceptions, resources, and comfort when responding to the needs of these communities.
2. To learn how existing policies and protocols might influence the ability of each partner agency to meet the needs of survivors who have a disability or are Deaf and to identify opportunities for strengthening policies and protocols that will build capacity to ensure culturally and linguistically appropriate services at each partner agency.
3. To understand, from the perspective of individuals served at each partner agency, what constitutes “best practices” at the intersection of domestic violence and the needs of individuals who have a disability or are Deaf.
4. To identify opportunities, as well as barriers, for building and sustaining partner agency capacity to provide culturally sensitive, trauma-informed responses to the needs of survivors who have a disability or are Deaf.
5. To explore relationships between partner agencies and identify opportunities for strengthening collaborative efforts to meet the needs of survivors who have a disability or are Deaf.

The Collaboration conducted its Needs Assessment using stakeholder discussions, individual interviews, and surveys. For Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office patrol officers, detectives, and first line supervisors (sergeants), we used a widely disseminated survey followed by stakeholder discussions with a smaller number of officers. For ILRC consumers and Hubbard House program participants, we used stakeholder discussions and interviews. For ILRC and Hubbard House direct service staff, we used stakeholder discussions, and for ILRC,

 Hubbard House and JSO leadership, we used interviews.

The following chart shows the breakdown of the various methods of gathering information and the number of participants for each.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| AccessJax Partners | Method | Number | Participants |
| **Hubbard House** |
| Survivors | **Stakeholder****discussion** | **2** | **24** |
|  | **Interviews** | **As requested. 0** |
| Direct Staff | **Stakeholder****discussion** | **1** | **4** |
|  | **Interviews** | **4** | **4** |
| Leadership **Interviews 3 3** |
| **ILRC** |
| Consumers | **Stakeholder****discussion** | **2** | **11** |
|  | **Interviews** | **As requested. 3** |
| Deaf Consumers | **Interviews** | **10** | **10** |
| Direct Staff | **Stakeholder discussion** | **1** | **8** |
| Leadership | **Interviews** | **4** | **4** |
| **JSO** |
| Patrol/Detectives/Supervisors | **Surveys** | **1000** | **497** |
| Patrol/Detectives/Supervisors | **Stakeholder****discussion** | **3** | **28** |
| Leadership | **Interviews** | **3** | **3** |
|  |

An additional important component of the Needs Assessment is use of the Vera Institute of Justice Performance Indicators tools. The Performance Indicators were used to collect information from ILRC and Hubbard House. The Indicators measure organizational commitment and capacity to serve individuals with a disability or who are Deaf.

The Needs Assessment was the first step to understand the opportunities and gaps in our organizations in order to create systemic change. During the Needs Assessment process, consistent themes emerged among all categories of participants. The following key findings summarize the themes that developed through the stakeholder discussions, interviews, survey, and Performance Indicators and will provide the foundation for systemic change and achievement of our mission.

### Staff Knowledge and Responsiveness

To respond most effectively to the unique needs of every victim/survivor at the intersection of disability and domestic violence, the partner agencies must work to deepen their knowledge of the dynamics of domestic violence and of the particular circumstances that victims who have a disability or who are Deaf encounter.

### Improved Policies and Procedures

All partners need to build upon and strengthen policies and procedures, including the creation of new ones, to better address the needs of survivors with disabilities or who are Deaf.

### Specific Needs of the Deaf Community

All partners have continuing challenges in responding to the needs of survivors who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

### Continuing Need for a Trauma-informed Approach

Although the partner agencies are committed to and have experience in providing trauma-informed services, because of staff turnover and constant advances in trauma-informed approaches, staff at all agencies need continued focused training support to provide services that respond to individual victims/survivors in a way that acknowledges the effects that trauma from abuse may have on behavior and decision-making.

### Insufficient Awareness of Services

Our stakeholder discussions revealed that staff at partnering agencies and the people they serve are not always aware of the services available to them.

### Vision for Sustainability and Continued Collaboration

To create lasting change, we must continue to work together, capitalize on each agency’s strengths and expertise, and build upon our existing programs to best serve survivors of domestic violence who have a disability or who are Deaf.

**Overview of Strategic Plan**

Using our Needs Assessment Report as our guide, the Collaboration discussed and devised plans to create safer, more welcoming and accessible agency responses for our specific demographics. In the fall of 2017, we consulted with our Vera Institute of Justice technical advisor who facilitated several planning sessions by telephone. This process helped the Collaboration to identify the initiatives that are our highest priority and most feasible to achieve within the remaining grant period. These are referred to as “short-term initiatives,” while “long- term initiatives” refer to Collaboration goals beyond the scope of the grant program, such as identifying resources for continued collaboration.

We have outlined our short-term initiatives to be achieved within an 18-month timeline, which contemplates a no-cost extension request from the Office on Violence Against Women. We have also summarized our long-term initiatives that include a plan for sustainability of our Collaboration.

Each short-term initiative is drawn from a general area for improvement identified in the Needs Assessment Report, which also includes the findings from periodic completion of the Performance Indicators by partners ILRC and Hubbard House. These initiatives are interrelated, and most are interdependent upon the success of other initiatives.

Within each short-term initiative are a series of activities, which detail the capacity-building changes Collaboration partners plan to make. A work plan chart provides a summary of short-term initiatives and activities and also identifies who is responsible for each and the anticipated timeline.

The identified short-term initiatives are:

* + Improve safety and accessibility at ILRC, Hubbard House, and the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office
* Improve policies and procedures
* Increase knowledge and skills of staff at partner agencies
* Meet the specific needs of the Deaf Community.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The partners will develop and implement the initiatives in this Strategic Plan as a full Collaboration team, using approaches similar to the ones used for designing the Needs Assessment Plan, conducting the Needs Assessment, and developing the Needs Assessment Report. The Collaboration will continue to meet twice monthly to work collectively, make decisions, delegate tasks, and monitor progress. The Project Manager (City of Jacksonville) and Project Director (ILRC) will continue to convene and facilitate meetings, document discussion, and prepare deliverables to be submitted to OVW.

In addition, all Collaboration members will be expected to take responsibility for significantly more tasks between meetings. For example, members will need to do research, draft documents, and meet with additional staff at their agencies in order to complete many of the activities included in this plan.

To be successful in the development and implementation of this Strategic Plan, we will form four workgroups, one dedicated to each of the four short-term initiatives. Collaboration team members from ILRC, Hubbard House, and JSO will serve on each workgroup. Members of our Collaboration team who have expertise in the given initiatives will lead the workgroups. They will recruit additional group members, including staff and leadership from the Collaboration partner agencies, as well as people who have received services. This approach will ensure that capacity-building changes at each agency are made with the perspectives and experiences of clients, consumers, staff, and leadership. These individuals may also be invited to attend meetings of the full Collaboration, as needed, to share their expertise with the team regarding the development and implementation of initiatives.

# Short-Term Initiatives

## Initiative 1: Improve Safety and Accessibility at ILRC, Hubbard House, and the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office

**Rationale:** A key finding from the Needs Assessment is that all three sites of change need improvement in either safety or accessibility or both. These gaps in safety and accessibility create both physical and attitudinal barriers to serving victims who have a disability or who are Deaf. Safety and Accessibility audits should be conducted annually at the sites of change to continually develop and implement barrier- removal plans to improve safety and access.

We will be conducting the audits at ILRC, Hubbard House, and the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office Intimate Violence Enhanced Services Team (InVEST) program. Because of the vast size of the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office relative to the partner agencies ILRC and Hubbard House, it is not feasible to conduct an audit of this entire law enforcement agency. The InVEST program has been chosen for the JSO audit site because it is addresses the needs of domestic violence victims who are at the highest risk of serious harm or death.

Based on the information gleaned from the Performance Indicators and the Needs Assessment, the ILRC audit will have a special focus on safety, and the audits at Hubbard House and InVEST will focus mainly on accessibility.

This initiative is also expected to intersect somewhat with a key finding from the Needs Assessment that all partner agencies need to improve policies and procedures as implementation of ongoing Safety and Accessibility audits will need to be incorporated into policies and procedures of the partner agencies. In addition, findings from the audits, especially from the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office InVEST program, may prompt the addition or revision of accommodations policies. Unlike ILRC and Hubbard House, there was no assessment using a Performance Indicators tool at JSO; therefore, the audit may reveal information not made manifest from the Needs Assessment.

This initiative further addresses a key finding regarding increasing awareness of services among partner agency personnel. Expanding the number of key individuals in each agency who will be involved in the development and implementation of the work plan for ongoing safety and accessibility assessment will result in greater knowledge of the services provided by the partner agencies.

**Objectives:** There are four objectives for Initiative 1 which will be undertaken consecutively.

* The **first** objective is to research and adapt tools for use in conducting Safety and Accessibility Audits at the sites of change.
* The Collaboration will research existing audit tools, focusing on the work of previous Disability Grant programs.
* Using its research as a basis for creating audit tools, the Collaboration will design a tool for our specific community needs, based on revision of tools used by previous Disability Grant programs.
* The tool will be reviewed and approved by leadership of the Collaboration agencies before being submitted to OVW for approval.
* Our **second** objective is to conduct Safety and Accessibility Audits at all three sites of change.
* We will form a Safety and Accessibility Workgroup to conduct the audits at ILRC, Hubbard House, and InVEST. Members of our Collaboration team who have expertise in the given initiatives will co-lead the workgroup and draw on other staff members in their agency as needed.
* We will add expertise to our workgroup by recruiting people who have received services to participate in the audits.
* We will train the workgroup members in use of the audit tools.
* Using the approved Collaboration audit tool, we will conduct audits at ILRC, Hubbard House, and InVEST.
	+ The InVEST program has been chosen as the law enforcement site for this objective because it is the locus of intensive efforts to provide safety to victims of domestic violence in our community.
	+ InVEST is already represented by three of the partners of AccessJax: the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office; Hubbard House; and the City of Jacksonville.
	+ The InVEST team reviews all JSO police reports involving domestic violence each week, conducts lethality assessments, and identifies victims at the greatest risk and offers them enhanced services from partners Hubbard House and JSO.
* Our **third** objective for the Safety and Accessibility Initiative is to develop barrier removal and safety enhancement plans.
* Findings from the Safety and Accessibility audits will be analyzed by the workgroup and recommendations made to the Collaboration on how to address the safety and access issues identified.
* The Collaboration will create a barrier removal and safety enhancement plan, including estimated costs for necessary improvements and present the plan to agency leadership for review and response.
* The Collaboration will review responses from agencies;

any necessary revisions will be made, and the plan will

be submitted to OVW for review and approval.

* The barrier removal and safety enhancement plan will then be implemented by the Collaboration at all three sites of

change, as feasible within the time frame of the current grant and as funding permits. Solutions that cannot be accomplished during the term of the grant will be identified as long-term objectives.

* Our **fourth** objective is to establish a plan to do annual Safety and Accessibility Audits.
* An Annual Audit Plan will be developed and agreed to in writing by the Collaboration partners.
* The Annual Audit Plan lends itself to the sustainability goals of the Collaboration by recognizing and addressing future needs of the partner agencies and the people we serve.

### Expected Outcomes

Tools and processes will be developed to allow the sites of change to increase their capacity to serve survivors of domestic violence who have a disability or who are Deaf by conducting regular safety and accessibility assessments which will then be used to identify and address current and potential environmental and attitudinal barriers. Partner agencies will revise policies and procedures to incorporate regular assessments.

Immediate or short-term solutions to identified safety issues and accessibility barriers will be implemented during the last six to eight months of the grant period as funding permits. Solutions requiring a longer time frame for implementation will be incorporated into long-term initiatives.

As a result of the activities undertaken in connection with this initiative, survivors who have a disability or who are Deaf will be better able to access services from the sites of change. Staff and the people we serve will feel safer and more comfortable providing and receiving services.

## Initiative 2: Improve Policies and Procedures

**Rationale:** Our Needs Assessment Report and Performance Indicators reflect that agency partners need to build upon and strengthen policies and procedures to better address the needs of survivors with disabilities or who are Deaf. Gaps in policy and procedures can result in barriers and limited choices for these victims. Gaps also can cause frustration on the part of the staff and lead to missed opportunities to provide assistance to those seeking services.

**Objectives**: There are three objectives for Initiative 2, which will be undertaken consecutively.

* The **first** objective will be to revise existing or to create new policies and procedures for ILRC. Based on the findings from the Performance Indicators and the Needs Assessment, these policies and procedures will focus on mandatory reporting and on confidentiality of consumer information at ILRC, with particular focus on confidentiality of disclosures of victimization.
* We will form a Policies and Procedures Workgroup that will serve all sites of change. Members of our Collaboration who have expertise in the given initiatives will co-lead the workgroup and draw on other staff members in their agency as needed. The workgroup will research best practices, focusing on policies and procedures created by other OVW Disability Grant programs.
* For ILRC, the Collaboration, in conjunction with the Workgroup, will create a policy and accompanying procedures for mandatory reporting of child abuse and abuse of vulnerable adults under Florida law.
	+ The workgroup will research mandatory reporting requirements under Florida law, including guidance from the Florida Department of Children and Families
	+ The workgroup will then draft a new mandatory reporting policy and accompanying procedures for adoption by ILRC.
* For ILRC, the Collaboration, in conjunction with the Workgroup, will revise the existing, and create a new Confidentiality Policy regarding consumer information at ILRC, with particular attention to issues around disclosures of victimization.
	+ The workgroup will review the existing confidentiality policy, drawing on policies developed by similar organizations, especially other Disability Grant participants.
	+ The workgroup will revise the Confidentiality Policy, paying particular attention to formalizing a process of referral of domestic violence victims to Hubbard House and other agencies, where appropriate.
* The **second** objective is to revise existing or create new policies and procedures at Hubbard House for community life in the shelter and for use of interpreting services. The policies chosen for this objective are based largely on review of Hubbard House using the Performance Indicators tool.
* A review of the Hubbard House Residents’ Handbook under the Policies section of the Indicators revealed the need to revise certain policies for community living in the shelter, such as use of fragrances, storage of medications, and the express inclusion of persons with disabilities in diversity statements, and then include those in the Handbook.
* The workgroup will review policies and procedures at Hubbard House regarding community life in the shelter, i.e. use of fragrances, storage of medications, and the express inclusion of persons with disabilities in diversity statements.
* The workgroup will then draft revised policies and procedures for community life in the shelter to be adopted by Hubbard House and included in the Residents’ Handbook.
* Review of policies using the Performance Indicators tool also revealed that the Hubbard House policy on using interpreters, including ASL interpreters, needs to be revised to strengthen confidentiality and conflict-of-interest provisions.
	+ - * The workgroup will review the existing policies regarding the use of interpreters, drawing on policies developed by similar organizations, especially other Disability Grant participants.
			* The workgroup will revise and amplify the Hubbard House policy on interpreters to strengthen confidentiality and conflict-of-interest provisions in agreements with interpreting services.
* Our **third** objective is to educate staff on the new policies.
* We will conduct mandatory trainings for staff on these new policies and procedures at the three sites of change. Attendance at the trainings will be documented in writing.
* Information on the revised policies and procedures will also be incorporated into new staff orientation at the sites of change.
* The Policy and Procedures Workgroup will consult with the Training and Education Workgroup to incorporate new policies and procedures in all training curriculum/education materials.

**Expected Outcomes:** Staff will benefit from improved policies and procedures that provide clear guidance on assisting domestic violence victims who are D/deaf or who have a disability. These victims will receive more safer and more accessible trauma-informed services.

## Initiative 3: Increase Knowledge and Skills of Staff at Partner Agencies

**Rationale:** This initiative emphasizes strengthening individual capacity of partner agency staff through training. It reflects the key Needs Assessment finding that staff need more information about the intersection of domestic violence and being Deaf or having a disability and the specific needs of survivors at this intersection. In addition, the Needs Assessment revealed that staff at partnering agencies and the people they serve are not always aware of the services available to them. Further, the Needs Assessment demonstrated the critical importance of trauma-informed services at the intersection of disability and domestic violence. Initiative 3 will address all of these findings through training.

Trainings will be targeted to three partner agencies in the Collaboration: ILRC, Hubbard House, and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office. Key Collaboration personnel in each agency will take the lead in developing the trainings, including analysis of existing available training materials. Collaboration personnel will also participate as trainers, supplemented by other experts in their respective agencies, as needed.

Trainings should not merely be basic “101” type introductions to these topics but will explore the individual, cultural, and systemic contexts in which domestic violence victims who have a disability or who are Deaf seek services and the appropriate response in each agency environment.

There are four objectives for Initiative 3 as follows.

* The **first** objective is to develop training for ILRC staff that will focus on serving the particular needs of victims of domestic violence. It is anticipated that this training will include dynamics of domestic violence, safety planning, disabilities that are the result of domestic violence, trauma-informed service provision, confidentiality, and mandatory reporting.
* The **second** objective is to develop training for Hubbard House that will focus on the particular needs of domestic violence victims who have a disability or who are Deaf. This training will include disability sensitivity, barriers, the Americans with Disabilities Act, accessibility, and accommodation, as well as disability-specific trauma-informed service provision.
* The **third** objective is to develop training for the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office by reference back to the Needs Assessment survey tool and discussions with leadership. It is anticipated that this training will focus on staff of the InVEST program and detectives in the Investigations Division.

**Expected Outcomes:** Staff at all partner agencies will benefit from training which integrates sensitivity to and awareness of domestic violence with the particular challenges faced by survivors who have a

disability or who are Deaf so that everyone is fully prepared to work with survivors at this intersection. In addition, staff at the three sites of change will be able to easily identify and access all of the relevant services available through all three agencies.

## Initiative 4: Meet the Specific Needs of the Deaf Community

**Rationale:** Given Jacksonville’s close proximity to the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind in nearby St. Johns County, our area has a significant population of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. Key findings from the Needs Assessment Report indicate that the Collaboration partners have continuing challenges in responding to the needs of survivors who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. The objectives below will address needed changes to improve service provision to these survivors.

**Objectives:** There are three objectives for Initiative 4 which will be addressed consecutively.

* The **first** objective will address the Needs Assessment information we received from the Deaf community regarding making agency communication more welcoming and inclusive.
* We will use Hubbard House as the starting point for change by adding a welcoming message in American Sign Language to the Hubbard House website.
* We will determine other information that should have an ASL component for long-term initiative planning.
* The **second** objective will address the need for a pool of interpreters who have been trained specifically to work with Deaf victims of domestic violence.
* We will begin by reviewing the trainings that are currently being used in the interpreting community across the country.
* We will revise and adapt these trainings, or create new ones, to meet the needs of our specific area.
* After OVW approval, we will offer this training to interested interpreters.
* After completing the training, the interpreters will be encouraged to attend the Citizens Police Academy offered by Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office. From interested participants who attend both trainings, a pool of specialized interpreters will be developed for use by the Collaboration partners for victims of domestic violence.
	+ The **third** objective is to increase knowledge of Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office and Hubbard House personnel by developing focused training on effective communication and cultural behaviors that affect service provision.
* Trainings that are already in use by JSO and Hubbard House will be reviewed as well as trainings developed and used by other OVW projects.
* The trainings will be revised and adapted, or new trainings created, to meet the needs of the Collaboration partners. Existing videos that educate staff regarding the right and wrong way to interact with a Deaf/HOH victim will be used.
* Upon approval by OVW, the Collaboration will conduct the trainings at each site.
* Development of trainings under this initiative will be coordinated with development of trainings under Initiative 3 discussed above.

### Expected Outcomes:

Staff at all partner agencies will benefit from trainings on effective communication and Deaf culture and be better equipped to work with a victim who is Deaf or hard of hearing.

Any Deaf person interested in learning about services from Hubbard House will benefit from American Sign Language video(s) being added to the website. Additionally, as a Collaboration we will use this initial use of new video as a learning experience of how to make future

videos for all sites of change.

Having a trained pool of interpreters will potentially lessen the trauma associated with ineffective communication that has previously been reported by police officers, advocates, and the Deaf community.

# Long-Term Initiatives

The AccessJax Collaboration team members have identified Long- Term Initiatives that are beyond the scope of funding for this grant project. These initiatives focus on expanding the project further into our agencies and promoting systems change within our broader community. It is likely that additional long-term initiatives will be revealed during implementation of this Strategic Plan and that the initiatives described below will be modified.

* + We would like to expand the objectives and activities of the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office beyond the InVEST program. The Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office has over 3000 employees including 1700 officers. While we chose our short-term initiative to focus on a particular program, all divisions would benefit from enhanced training and service provision at the intersection of disability and domestic violence. To address the key finding “Meeting the Needs of the Deaf Community,” all officers, leadership, dispatch, and others would benefit from additional trainings on Effective Communication.
	+ Our Needs Assessment revealed a gap in awareness by the Deaf community about programs and services available at all sites of change. To raise awareness, we would produce additional videos in American Sign Language for each agency. The video topics would be in-more depth than the welcoming message for Hubbard House outlined in our Short-Term Initiatives. Topics could include explanations of all of the programs available at each agency, eligibility requirements, safety planning, etc. D/deaf victims would benefit from having videos in American Sign Language available on the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office patrol officer’s individual laptops. Videos would be short clips that the officer could choose depending on the situation.
* AccessJax recognizes that inevitable changes in staff at each agency, as well as the rapid-fire way in which technology evolves, will require diligent monitoring to maintain our improved capacity to serve survivors who have a disability or who are D/deaf. Conducting Annual Safety and Accessibility Audits will allow us to monitor for gaps and continually improve sustainable organizational changes. In addition, we would like to continue to study and revise policies and procedures to best serve survivors who have a disability or who are Deaf.
* The long-term objectives will require additional time and funding; therefore, the partners will Identify resources to continue the Collaboration, including applying for continuation funding and researching additional funding sources.

# Conclusion

The work of the Collaboration has resulted in a willingness and readiness to improve our response to victims of domestic violence who have a disability or who are Deaf. The Collaboration is focused on creating change and has been working together to identify and implement needed change since our first meeting. This Strategic Plan details the Initiatives, Objectives, and Key Activities which will create new and improved standards and practices at partners Independent Living Resource Center, Hubbard House, and the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office, facilitated by primary grantee partner the City of Jacksonville. Our collective work has created a strong foundation that clearly highlights the importance of community collaboration to improve services for domestic violence victims with disabilities or who are Deaf.

AccessJax believes that we have developed a Strategic Plan that will guide our Collaboration through the process of creating needed organizational change within the partner agencies as identified in the Needs Assessment. This will be accomplished through:

* + - Improving Safety at ILRC
		- Improving Access at Hubbard House and JSO (InVEST)
		- Improving Policies and Procedures at all three sites of change
		- Increasing staff knowledge at all three sites of change to better serve survivors who have a disability or who are Deaf
		- Addressing the specific needs of the Deaf Community
		- Sustaining and expanding the work of the Collaboration beyond the current grant and into the future.

The collective impact of these initiatives will be sustainable change for all project partners.

## Work Plan and Timeline

|  |
| --- |
| **Initiative 1 - Improve Safety and Accessibility at ILRC, Hubbard House, and Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office (InVEST)** |
| **Objective 1: Research and adapt tools for use in conducting Safety and/or Accessibility Audits at the sites of change** |
| **KEY ACTIVITIES** | **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE** | **MONTH** |
| Collaboration Team | Work Group | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7-8 | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | 17-18 |
| **1.** Research existing audit tools | X |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2.** Revise and adapt audit tools | X |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **3.** Send to OVW for review and approval | X |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Objective 2: Conduct Safety and/or Accessibility Audits at ILRC, Hubbard House, and JSO (InVEST)** |
| **KEY ACTIVITIES** | **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE** | **MONTH** |
| Collaboration Team | Work Group | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7-8 | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | 17-18 |
| **1.** Form a Safety and Access Workgroup byrecruiting staff/volunteers from ILRC, Hubbard House, and JSO | X |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2.** Conduct orientation and training of new Workgroup members on the Safetyand Accessibility Audit tools | X | X |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **3.** Conduct Safety and/or Accessibility Audits at the three sites of change |  | X |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Objective 3: Develop barrier removal and safety enhancement plans** |
| **KEY ACTIVITIES** | **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE** | **MONTH** |
|  | Collaboration Team | Work Group | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7-8 | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | 17-18 |
| **1.** Analyze findings and makerecommendations on how to address the safety and access issues identified |  | X |  |  |  |  | X | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2.** Create a barrier removal and safety enhancement plan, including estimated costs for necessary improvements to be presented toagency leadership for response | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |
| **3.** Review responses from agencies | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |
| **4.** Make any necessary revisions to the plan andsend to OVW for review and approval | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |
| **5.** Implement barrier removal and safety enhancement plan at the three sites of change |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X | X | X | X |
| **Objective 4: Establish a plan to do annual Safety and Accessibility Audits** |
| **KEY ACTIVITIES** | **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE** | **MONTH** |
|  | Collaboration Team | Work Group | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7-8 | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | 17-18 |
| **1.** Develop a written Annual Audit Plan to include ILRC, Hubbard House and JSO (InVEST) | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |
| **2.** Send plan to OVW for approval | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |

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| **Initiative 2**: **Improve Policies and Procedures** |
| **Objective 1: Revise existing and create new policies and procedures at ILRC for mandatory reporting and for confidentiality of consumer information, with particular attention to disclosures of victimization** |
| **KEY ACTIVITIES** | **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE** | **MONTH** |
| Collaboration Team | Work Group | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7-8 | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | 17-18 |
| **1.** Form a Policy and Procedures Work Groupthat will serve all sites of change | X |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2.** Research mandatory reporting requirementsunder Florida law, including guidance from DCF |  | X |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **3.** Draft new mandatory reporting policy andprocedure for ILRC |  | X |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. Send to OVW for review and approval | X |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. Review existing confidentiality policy andprocedures |  | X |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. Revise confidentiality policy |  | X |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. Send draft policy to OVW for review/approval | X |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Objective 2: Revise existing or create new policies and procedures at Hubbard House for community life in the shelter and for use of interpreting services** |
| **KEY ACTIVITIES** | **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE** | **MONTH** |
|  | Collaboration Team | Work Group | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7-8 | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | 17-18 |
| **1.** Review policies and procedures for community living at the Hubbard House shelter(i.e. fragrances, medications) |  | X |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2.** Revise community living policies and procedures |  | X |  |  |  |  | X | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **3.** Send revised community living policies andprocedures to OVW for approval | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |
| **4**. Review policies and procedures for use ofinterpreting services |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |
| **5**. Revise policies and procedures for use ofinterpreting services |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |
| **6**.Send revised policies and procedures to OVWfor review/approval | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |
| **Objective 3: Educate staff on new policies and procedures at all three sites of change** |
| **KEY ACTIVITIES** | **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE** | **MONTH** |
|  | CollaborationTeam | Work Group | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7-8 | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | 17-18 |
| **1.** Conduct mandatory trainings for staff on new policies and procedures at the three sites of change. Attendance at the trainings will be documented in writing. | X | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |
| **2.** Incorporate information on the revised policiesand procedures into new staff orientation at the sites of change. | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |
| **3.** Consult with the Training and Education Work Group to incorporate new policies and procedures in all training curriculum/education materials, as needed | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |

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| **Initiative 3**: **Increase Knowledge and Skills of Staff at Partner****Agencies ILRC, Hubbard House, and Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office (InVEST)** |
| **Objective 1: Develop training for ILRC staff that will focus on serving the particular needs of victims of domestic violence, focusing on safety** |
| **KEY ACTIVITIES** | **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE** | **MONTH** |
| Collaboration Team | Work Group | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7-8 | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | 17-18 |
| **1.** Form an Education and Training Work Groupthat will serve all sites of training | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |
| **2.** Research existing trainings |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |
| **3. A**dapt trainings, and create new ones, asneeded, and submit to Collaboration team |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X | X |  |  |
| **4.** Review and provide feedback | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |
| **5.** Incorporate feedback and send to OVW forreview and approval | X | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |
| **6.** Conduct trainings at ILRC | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X | X |
| **Objective 2: Develop training for Hubbard House staff that will focus on accessibility for****survivors who have a disability or who are Deaf** |
| **KEY ACTIVITIES** | **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE** | **MONTH** |
| Collaboration Team | Work Group | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7-8 | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | 17-18 |
| **1.** Research existing trainings |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |
| **2.** Adapt trainings, and create new ones, asneeded, and submit to Collaboration team |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X | X |  |  |
| **3.** Review and provide feedback | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |
| **4**.Incorporate feedback and send to OVW forreview and approval | X | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |
| **5**.Conduct trainings at Hubbard House | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X | X |
| **Objective 3: Develop training for JSO (InVEST) that will focus on accessibility for survivors****who have a disability or who are Deaf** |
| **KEY ACTIVITIES** | **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE** | **MONTH** |
|  | Collaboration Team | Work Group | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7-8 | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | 17-18 |
| **1.** Research existing trainings |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |
| **2.** Adapt trainings, and create new ones, as needed, and submit to Collaboration team |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X | X |  |  |
| **3.** Review and provide feedback | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |
| **4.**Incorporate feedback and send to OVW for review and approval | X | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |
| **5.** Conduct trainings at JSO (InVEST and Crimes Against Persons) | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X | X |

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| **Initiative 4: Meet the Specific Needs of the Deaf Community** |
| **Objective 1: Make agency communication more welcoming and inclusive** |
| **KEY ACTIVITIES** | **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE** | **MONTH** |
| Collaboration Team | Work Group | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7-8 | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | 17-18 |
| **1.** Form Deaf/HOH Workgroup | X |  |  |  |  X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2.** Draft script for welcoming video in ASL to goon Hubbard House’s website and submit to OVW for approval |  | X |  |  |  X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **3.** Submit script to Collaboration team |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **4.** Review and provide feedback | X |  |  |  |  |  |  X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **5.** Incorporate feedback and send to OVW for review and approval | X | X |  |  |  |  |  |  X |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **6.** Perform pre-production activities, e.g., recruitactors; confirm locations |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  X |  |  |  |  |  |
| **7.** Film video and add to Hubbard House website | X | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  X |  X |  |  |  |  |
| **Objective 2: Establish a pool of interpreters who have been trained specifically to work with****Deaf victims of domestic violence** |
| **KEY ACTIVITIES** | **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE** | **MONTH** |
|  | Collaboration Team | Work Group | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7-8 | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | 17-18 |
| **1.** Research existing trainings for interpreters on relationship violence |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  X |  |  |  |  |
| **2.** Adapt trainings and send to Collaborationteam for review |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  X |  |  |  |  |
| **3.** Review and provide feedback | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  X |  |  |  |
| **4.** Incorporate feedback and send to OVW for review and approval | X | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  X |  |  |  |
| **5.** Apply for CEU approval from FRID |  X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  X |  |  |  |
| **6.** Conduct trainings for interpreters |  X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  X |  |  |
| **Objective 3: Increase knowledge of Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office and Hubbard House personnel by developing focused training on effective communication and cultural behaviors that affect service provision** |
| **KEY ACTIVITIES** | **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE** | **MONTH** |
|  | Collaboration Team | Work Group | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7-8 | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | 17-18 |
| **1.** Research existing trainings |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  X |  |  |  |
| **2.** Adapt trainings and create new ones, as needed, and submit to Collaboration team |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  X |  |  |  |
| **3.** Review and provide feedback | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  X |  |  |  |
| **4.** Incorporate feedback and send to OVW for review and approval | X | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  X |  |  |
| **5.** Conduct trainings a at JSO and Hubbard House | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  X |  X |

**Appendix A CORE VALUES**

### Accessibility

We firmly believe that Deaf individuals and people with disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse and less likely to disclose. They should not have the undue burden of facing obstacles while attempting to receive services. Our Collaboration commits to addressing these physical, systemic, cultural, and linguistic barriers.

### Collaboration

All partners of our Collaboration have previously worked together towards the common goals of raising awareness and improving services. We recognize that trust is essential in advancing our work to create systems change. We agree that all partners have an equal voice, with all members bringing different areas of expertise to the project.

### Commitment

Each member of the Collaboration commits to attending meetings, participating in discussions, and sharing their unique knowledge, experience, and expertise. Each member also commits to communicating project developments with the leadership team of their respective agencies to effect changes in policy that will improve and enhance services.

### Community Responsibility

We believe that providing services to survivors who have a disability or who are Deaf should be informed by the social or community model of disability, which puts the responsibility on society to eliminate physical and attitudinal barriers. As agencies who serve survivors, we are committed to eliminating these barriers in order to create and sustain an environment in which all survivors can actively participate on an equal basis.

### Confidentiality

The Collaboration recognizes that confidentiality is a key element in providing a safe environment for victims of domestic violence. We support the rights of individuals to manage their own information, and we are thus committed to holding client information confidential unless the individual gives consent to disclose or unless the disclosure is required by law.

### Cultural Competence

Our Collaboration understands that a survivor being Deaf or having a disability, as well as other cultural identifications, may require different approaches to service. Instead of a one-size fits all approach, we seek to develop and improve our knowledge, attitudes, and awareness to effectively engage and work across a diverse range of cultural groups. Our approach will be one of inclusiveness of all levels of ability, race, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, and economic class.

### Justice

We believe that the proper functioning of the civil and criminal justice systems is crucial in addressing domestic violence against Deaf individuals and people with disabilities. We value each partner’s unique experiences with and perspectives on the justice systems in our community. We will work together to enhance the ability of those systems to hold perpetrators accountable and to provide legal remedies for survivors.

### Safety

We believe that victims/survivors with disabilities or who are Deaf have a right to feel emotionally and physically safe when seeking services related to domestic violence. This includes recognizing the particular safety implications for people with disabilities or who are Deaf while acting in a way that also respects their choices. We believe that victim/survivors, when informed, are the best judges of what is safe for them, and we agree to support them by providing a safe and empowering environment for service delivery.

### Self-Determination and Empowerment

We respect that individuals have abilities to make informed choices. We also recognize that many individuals who are Deaf or who have disabilities rely on the support and advocacy of others. We are fully committed to relying on the expertise and experience of the survivors we serve.

### Social Justice

We believe in the concepts of human rights, inclusion, and equality of opportunity for all members of society. We commit to working toward a socially just world by creating and enhancing systems that will deliver fully accessible, responsive, appropriate, respectful, and safe services for survivors of domestic violence who are Deaf or who have a disability.

### Survivor-led (“Nothing About Us Without Us”)

From its earliest days, the domestic violence movement has been survivor-led. We are committed to learning from and being led by Deaf survivors and survivors with disabilities as we work toward a community where all survivors have full access to a well-informed, respectful, culturally competent, and a collaborative network of service providers. Our project’s success also relies heavily on the participation and feedback of survivors. Their input is invaluable to our work.